

MEMORANDUM



Date : 28 November 2006  
To : All Manning Agencies  
From : Nonimmigrant Visa Unit – Seafarer Team  
Subject : **B-1/OCS Visa and U.S. Coast Guard Letter**

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The Seafarer Team has been getting numerous inquiries about offshore B-1/OCS visas and the required U.S. Coast Guard letter that must accompany those visa applications. We hope that the following information will clarify our policy.

- The validity of the B-1/OCS visa is 60 months. Limited validity visas are no longer issued.
- U.S. Coast Guard letters must accompany **ALL** B-1/OCS visa applications.
- Please make sure that the U.S. Coast Guard letter is current and is a high quality copy. If the letter has whited-out/scratched out dates and ship information, applicants will be temporarily refused 221g.
- Please make sure that the U.S. Coast Guard letter has the name of the ship, shipyard or platform that is on the DS-156 Form, the letter of guarantee and the POEA or POEA in-house processed contract. If this is not the case, the applicant will be temporarily refused 221g.
- **In order to reduce fraud, we are now requiring manning agencies to verify ownership of the ship, shipyard or platform if the U.S. Coast Guard letter is older than 18 months.** Manning agencies should visit the [Equasis website](#) and print out the page that confirms your agency's ownership of the ship, shipyard or platform. Please include this printout in the application documents.
- A new U.S. Coast Guard letter is **NOT** required if the letter is older than 18 months, but a U.S. Coast Guard letter older than 18 months must be accompanied by the printed page from the Equasis website.

Thank you for your cooperation, and we hope that this information will be helpful to your staff.

Seafarer Team  
Nonimmigrant Visa Unit  
Consular Section  
U.S. Embassy Manila